



**CALIFORNIA
HIGH-SPEED RAIL
AUTHORITY**

TO: Chairman Pringle and Authority Board Members

FROM: Carrie L. Bowen, Deputy Director

DATE: November 30, 2009

**RE: Alternative Analysis Update Fresno to Bakersfield Section
Agenda Item 12 (A)**

The purpose of this agenda item is to summarize the results of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) staff Alternatives Analysis Workshop for the Fresno to Bakersfield Section of the California High-Speed Train (HST) Project. Based on the alignment routes and station locations selected in the Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), the Alternatives Analysis process develops specific alignment alternatives that are feasible and practicable to be carried through preliminary design and included in the Project EIR/EIS. The Fresno to Bakersfield Section is approximately 113 miles long. The limits are from the Fresno HST Station south to the Bakersfield HST Station. The project includes a potential station in the Visalia/Tulare/Hanford area.

In March 2009, three scoping meetings were held for this Section, originally with limits from Merced to Bakersfield. The public scoping meetings for this Section were held in Fresno, Visalia and Bakersfield. Since those scoping meetings, amended Notice of Intent and Notice of Preparation were advertised advising the public and affected agencies and stakeholders that the Merced to Bakersfield project was being divided into two projects, the Merced to Fresno and Fresno to Bakersfield projects. The public scoping period for the Fresno to Bakersfield Section was extended. Many of the comments gathered during the original scoping period addressed proposed alignment alternatives and design options for consideration. The extended scoping period did not alter any of the alternatives being considered.

The initial alternatives were presented to state and local agencies at technical working group and stakeholder meetings. Public information meetings and meetings with the Resource Agencies were also conducted. The alignments and design options were refined based on the comments received. On June 23, 2009, a workshop with FRA and the Authority refined these alternatives further and several untenable alternatives were not carried forward.

An alternatives analysis workshop with the FRA and Authority was conducted on October 13, 2009 to present information regarding the refined set of alternatives being studied. The purpose of the workshop was to obtain direction from the FRA/Authority staff on what alignments should be carried forward for more detailed environmental impact investigation and to discuss evaluation results and conclusions. The attached map and memo summarize which HST alignment alternatives should be carried forward into the Project EIR/EIS process. Solid lines on the map indicate alignment alternatives that were selected during the workshop to be carried forward into the EIR/EIS process. Dashed lines indicate the alignment alternatives that were evaluated and determined not to be carried forward.

The supporting detailed analysis of the alternatives will be provided in the draft Alternatives Analysis report, which will be made available in December. The findings from this report will then be presented to the general public and reviewed with public agencies. Based on comments received, the report will then be refined and issued as a Final Alternatives Analysis report.

Board Recommendation

This is an informational item only.

Attachments:

- Map – Alternatives Carried Forward (October 2009)
- Summary - Fresno to Bakersfield Project EIR/EIS Alternatives Analysis Workshop